

THE CLAIMS

1-25. (canceled)

26. (previously presented) An apparatus for use with a container of liquid that is suspended from an aircraft flying over a ground target area, the container having an outlet through which the liquid is dropped from the container, said apparatus comprising:

a diffuser configured to diffuse the liquid exiting the container outlet horizontally outward beyond the container into the air above the ground target area, whereby the liquid is diffused over a wide area;

said diffuser having a diffuser inlet for receiving the liquid and diffuser outlets for discharging the liquid into the air, said diffuser outlets being spaced horizontally from each other;

said diffuser comprising a manifold communicating said diffuser inlet with said diffuser outlets;

said manifold having rigid hydraulic lines extending from said diffuser inlet, and also having flexible hydraulic lines extending from said rigid lines to said diffuser outlets; and

buoyant structures configured to maintain said diffuser outlets above the container when the container is submerged in a body of liquid.

27. (canceled)

28. (previously presented) An apparatus comprising:

a container configured to be suspended from an aircraft flying over a ground target area, said container having a container outlet and being vented to enable liquid contents of said container to exit said container through said container outlet by the force of only gravity; and

a diffuser configured to diffuse liquid, by the force of gravity, from said container outlet into air above the ground target area throughout a circular area extending horizontally outward beyond said container;

wherein said diffuser includes a diffuser inlet, a plurality of diffuser outlets, and a manifold communicating said diffuser inlet with said diffuser outlets, said manifold having rigid hydraulic lines extending radially outward from said diffuser inlet, and also having flexible hydraulic lines extending from said rigid hydraulic lines to said diffuser outlets to suspend said diffuser outlets from said rigid hydraulic lines under the force of gravity.

29. (new) An apparatus for use with a container of liquid that is suspended from an aircraft flying over a ground target area, the container having an outlet through which the liquid can exit the container, said apparatus comprising:

a diffuser configured to diffuse the liquid exiting the container outlet horizontally outward beyond the container into air above the ground target area, said diffuser having a diffuser inlet for receiving the liquid from the container outlet, diffuser outlets for discharging the liquid into the air, and a manifold communicating said diffuser inlet with said outlets, with said manifold supporting said diffuser outlets at locations that are spaced horizontally outward and vertically downward from said diffuser inlet so as to diffuse the liquid by the force of only gravity;

said manifold having rigid hydraulic lines extending from said diffuser inlet, and also having flexible hydraulic lines extending from said rigid lines to said diffuser outlets to suspend said diffuser outlets from said rigid hydraulic lines under the force of gravity.